What is this thing called Knowledge Translation?: What do scientists think of end-users?

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What is Knowledge Translation?

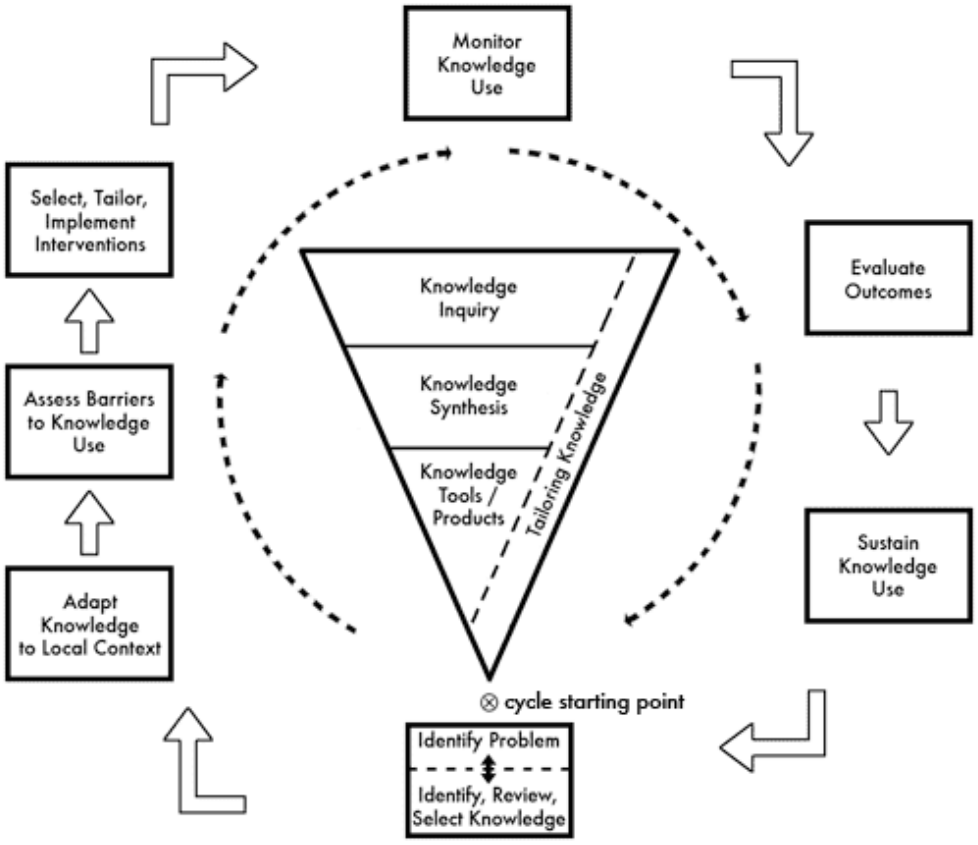
What we **know**
(information gathered from research)

What we **do**
(actions of end-users)

What is Knowledge Translation?

CIHR:

"a dynamic and iterative process that includes **synthesis**, **dissemination**, **exchange** and ethically sound **application** of knowledge"



Graham et al. (2006). *The Journal of Continuing Education in Health Professions.*

What is Knowledge Translation?

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2 types:

1) End-of-grant KT
   - focus is on dissemination activities
   - After the knowledge is 'created'

2) Integrated KT (iKT)
   - Applies KT principles throughout the research cycle
   - "involving knowledge users as equal partners alongside researchers will lead to research that is more relevant to, and more likely to be useful to, the knowledge users" (CIHR)

What is Knowledge Translation?

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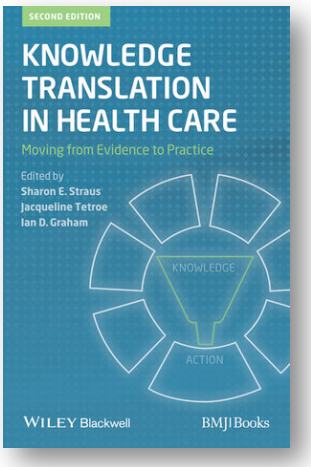
Many research gaps in iKT:

- "some fields for some problems"
- "…*what are the most effective strategies for developing and sustaining research-knowledge user partnerships and how can research evidence be optimally integrated with contextual evidence?*" (Bowen and Graham, 2013:21)
- *Bowen and Graham:* we need iKT within the big biomedical studies



Our "grand experiment"

Stakeholders and scientists, integrated together on this research project – painting a more comprehensive picture of food allergy in Canada.

GET-FACTS

- "Genetics, Environment and Therapies: Food Allergy Clinical Tolerance Studies"

McGill University

University of Calgary

University of Manitoba

McMaster University

Queen's University

UBC

University of Saskatchewan

University of Waterloo

Dalhousie University
Inspiring Minds

GET-FACTS

- 4 pillars of research:

1. Genetic determinants of food allergy and tolerance
2. Environmental impact on functional and immunological tolerance to foods
3. Novel biomarkers to assess allergy and tolerance
4. An end-user driven research agenda through Knowledge Translation

GET-FACTS

An end-user driven research agenda through Knowledge Translation:

- GET-FACTS Steering Committee
  - Representatives from patient oriented and not-for-profit **organizations**
  - Representatives from **policy**
  - Representatives from the GET-FACTS **researchers**

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An end-user driven research agenda through Knowledge Translation:

- Meeting a minimum once a year (often more)
- Quantitative data, after all meetings
- Terms of Reference for Steering Committee
  - Series of deliverables
- In-depth Interviews with Steering Committee AND project scientists at T1

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An end-user driven research agenda through Knowledge Translation:

- "Researching the researchers" → novel approach– researching it as it unfolds
- <u>This presentation:</u>
  SCIENTISTS perspectives on KT and end-user involvement in biomedical research

Methods

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We asked for scientists to reflect on iKT and their experience of working with end-users

- N=16 semi-structured 1 hour interviews with GET-FACTS co-applicant scientists (2 non-responsive)
  - multi-discipline, located across Canada
  - Summer 2014
- Thematically coded and analyzed

Results

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Previous experiences working with end-users?

- YES: n=12
  media, community/patient groups, own patients
- Somewhat: n=2
  industry, periphery involvement
- No: n=2

Results

When I say the term "*Knowledge Translation*" what does that mean to you?

Ambiguity

- " …people keep using it, and saying it in grants and publications and things, but I have no idea exactly [what it means]. What is this knowledge translation thing? You know, we just keep saying it…"

Results

When I say the term "*Knowledge Translation*" what does that mean to you?

An emphasis on the USE:

- "scientific discovery can then be used in some sort of practical way"
- "From the bench to the bedside"

Results

What is KT to you?

Sometimes "a trendy term"; think about it when writing a grant:

- "These kind of mandates only feed the disinformation in the long run. Oh [shoot] I got my grant due and I have got to resubmit next year – I better put out a knowledge translation blurb so that I can get it"

Results

The role of scientists in KT

Some belief in the 'pure' scientist:

- "There's always that end goal to translate knowledge into new therapies, but it's not directly what we do."

Results

The role of scientists in KT

More viewed scientists as the 'in-between':

- "I think we need to get out of our ivory towers and understand that our findings have no meaning unless the lay public knows about them and they are translated into practical strategies"
- "I think [scientists] are important in the process of understanding… not just knowledge gatherers."

Results

Working with end-users during the research process *(iKT)*:

A grounding experience:

- "It is no longer that I'm going to grad school to get a degree, but I am actually solving a problem that is important"

Results

Working with end-users during the research process *(iKT)*:

A potential for conflict of visions:

- "the problem is each stakeholder and each stakeholder community has its own focus often with preconceived and relatively rigid perspectives on specific issues, and they may not be open to how they think about a problem…"

Results

Working with end-users during the research process *(iKT)*:

But also a drain on TIME as a resource:

- "I know that time is money… you know that going to [pubic events for knowledge translation], many times I'm not getting paid for that. But I still think that it is important and rewarding… I guess it depends on the personality of the researcher"

Results

Working with end-users during the research process *(iKT)*:

Incremental progress of science:

- "people are always interested in a cure, … they may not realize that to get to the cure stage, you actually need to know what the underlying mechanism is…. And the lay person feels like, why are we wasting our money look for causes when we should be looking for cures?"

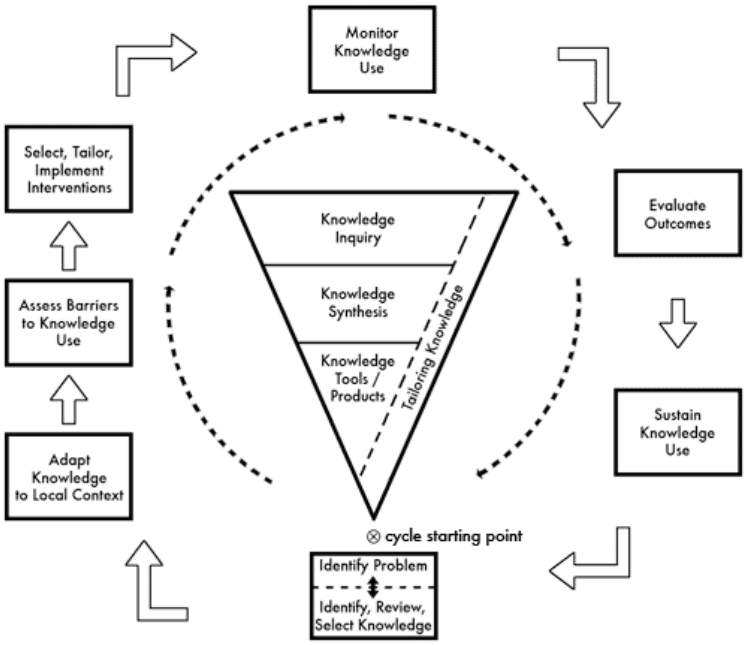
Discussion

- Strong desire (and practice) on the part of the scientists to connect with "real people" to understand their experiences and inform the research.
- Tool for grants, but there is value in it
- Linear conceptualizations of KT
- Scientists as 'knowledge brokers'

Discussion

- BUT there are hesitations regarding iKT for biomedical research…
  - demands on time (research environment that gives little credit for this time use)
  - tension created from the incremental progress of science while end-users desire more timely explanations (cures)

Concluding thoughts



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Concluding thoughts

- Need for more education for scientists on the conceptualization and importance of iKT
- GET-FACTS model of research (and iKT generally):
  - Potential for 'game changer' in biomedical research
- But still early days…
  - Successful collaboration will take active work – time for 'true' integration
  - Concerns of scientists must be incorporated into plans going forward
  - Greater exposure = greater acceptance of iKT

Thank you

GET-FACTS participants

Visit our site:

uwaterloo.ca/get-facts-knowledge-translation/

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